

**Minutes of the Graduate Council  
December 13, 2023**

**Members in Attendance:** Ali Beskok, Kate Carté, Alan Itkin, Akihito Kamata, Elfi Kraka, Anna Lovatt, Brian Molanphy, Volkan Otugen, Anthony Petrosino, Robin Poston, Dinesh Rajan, Gretchen Smith

**Members Not in Attendance:** Renee McDonald, Alexandra E. Pavlakis

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**Business:**

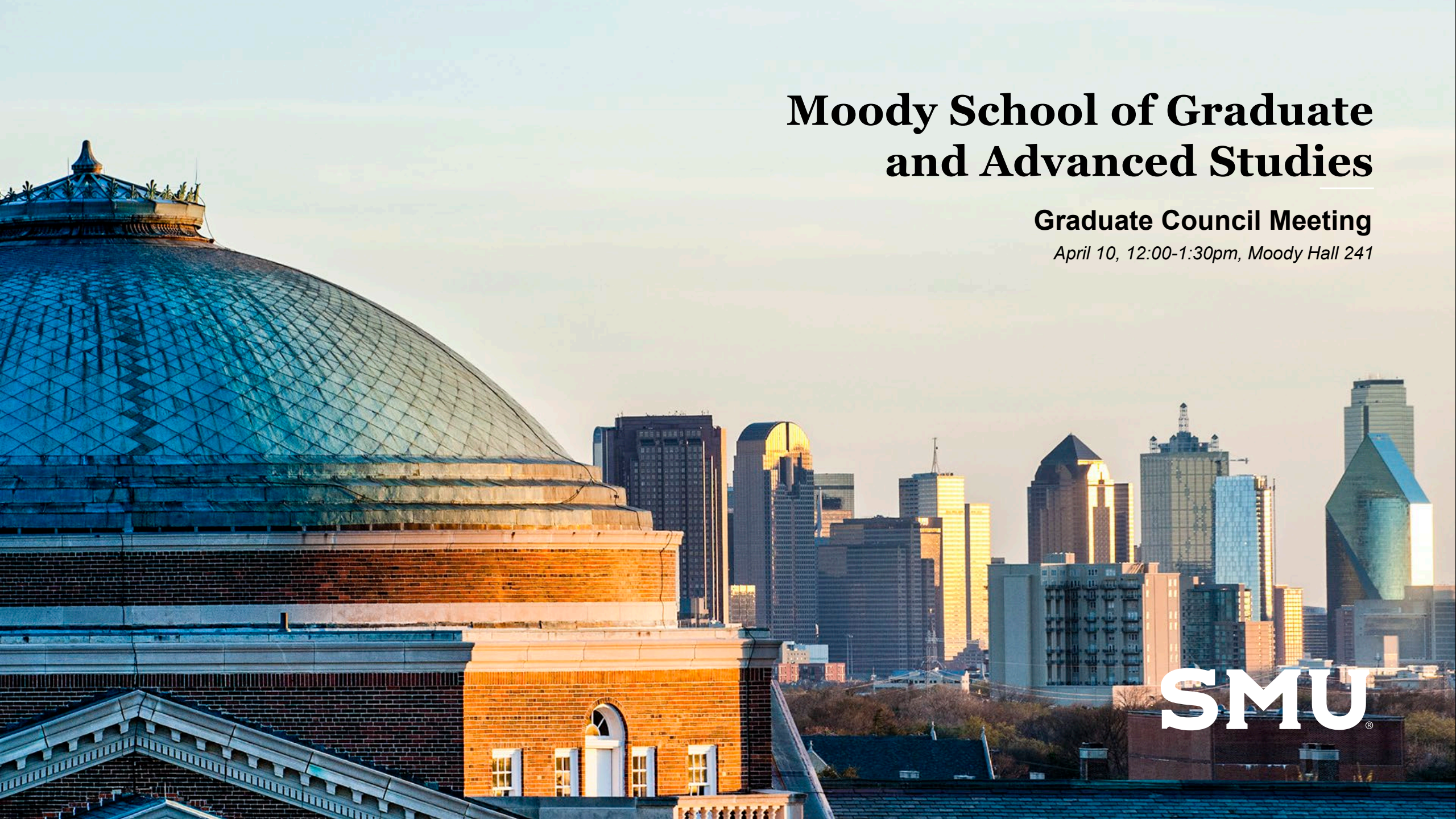
- **Minutes of the November Meeting:** The graduate council confirmed that there were no comments made on the December minutes pdf. Dr. Otugen made a motion to approve the minutes, Dr. Beskok seconded the motion, and the minutes were approved by the council.
- **Aga Khan University Programs (visit from Fareena Feroze and colleagues):** Dr. Poston introduced Fareena Feroze, Coordinator of the International Internship Program for AKU. Dr. Poston explained that Fareena came to visit SMU to discuss synergies between programs and the potential of building a pipeline from her program to our school, or establishing another type of productive relationship. Fareena joined the council to present information about her programs. The council discussed Fareena's presentation and noted that the programs are mainly for undergraduate students. Therefore, the council agreed that this information should be given to the SMU Abroad office.
- **Graduate Student Experience Survey (visit from Dayna Oscherwitz):** Dr. Oscherwitz asked the council for their input on the surveys that the provost's office distributes to all SMU graduates. The purpose of the survey is to gather graduation outcomes, particularly employment outcomes, but there is also an interest in a student satisfaction survey. Dr. Oscherwitz asked the council to consider if there is a need for a survey at the graduate level. A graduate level survey would raise the following questions: does SMU need separate surveys at the master's and Ph.D. levels, when would SMU distribute that survey, and what content might it contain? Dr. Rajan commented that schools are not allowed to distribute this kind of survey individually, but that it must be done centrally through Dr. Oscherwitz's office. Dr. Oscherwitz responded that she is open to letting individual schools conduct the surveys if this is the best practice, but the data must not be inconsistent. It is important to know that there is a survey office at SMU and if they conduct the survey then their office will analyze the data, but if the schools do it, they need to analyze their own data. Dr. Oscherwitz suggested that the council have an internal conversation about what they need and then reach back out to her.

- **Parental Leave Agenda Item:** Dr. Poston asked the parental leave subcommittee to discuss the recent input from the Academic Affairs Forum and revise the drafted policy (slide 7).
- **Provost Faculty Fellow Assistantship Project Updates:** Dr. Poston updated the council that Dr. Karen Lupo continues to work, but that Moody is not yet ready to share her results.
- **Federal Work Study and Graduate Assistantships:** Dr. Poston announced to the committee that Moody leadership is working with the Office of Financial Aid to use work study funds for graduate students (slide 18). Dr. Poston shared that when she was with the University of Memphis, they could use work study funds for one month's salary of a student's stipend, which allowed budgets to go further. Dr. Poston would like to implement this method at SMU. Dr. Itkin clarified that domestic students would qualify, while international students would not, and nothing would change for the student except that she would need to fill out the FAFSA. Professor Molanphy asked that Pam Henderson, Director of Scholarships and Financial Aid in the Meadows School, be brought into this conversation and Dr. Smith agreed to reach out to Pam Henderson. The Office of Financial Aid will continue to conduct research on whether this is something that can be done in Texas, and then Dr. Poston will present it to the council. Dr. Poston hopes to implement this strategy in fall 2024.
- **Graduate Student Success Day:** Dr. Poston reminded the council that Graduate Student Success Day is January 29, 2024 (slide 22). Dr. Poston sent out a save the date and will also send an invitation to faculty to register. The council agreed that the invitation should be sent to faculty in the second week of January and another reminder should be sent a couple days before the event. Dr. Itkin noted that Lillian Eby's talk will be recorded for faculty to review, as the goal of this day is to train and assist faculty in developing best practices for graduate student success.
- **Research and Innovation Week 2024:** Dr. Itkin informed the committee that Research and Innovation Week 2024 will take place April 1-5 and that Moody would like to promote additional events that fit under the umbrella of RIW. Dr. Itkin asked Dr. Smith and Professor Molanphy to consider if the timing works to include the MFA Student Final Project Exhibition. Dr. Itkin announced that the undergraduate poster session will be held on Tuesday in Moody Hall, the graduate poster session, which will be divided into two sessions, will be held on Wednesday and also take place in Moody Hall, and on Thursday the keynote speaker, Keivan Stassun will give a talk on his work with the Frist Center, neurodiversity, and his experiences as the founding director of the Fisk-Vanderbilt Masters-to-Ph.D. Bridge program. Dr. Itkin informed the council that we currently have two co-sponsors for RIW: the Dedman College Interdisciplinary Institute and the Simmons School. Dr. Itkin asked the council to consider what organizations might additionally co-sponsor RIW, which would mean providing some funds for the after reception and promoting the events with their email list.
- **Changing R1 Criteria:** Robin reviewed the changes in the R1 criteria with the council (slide 24). To reach R1 classification, a university must now spend \$50 million in research expenditures a year and confer 70 doctorates in any research field a year. Dr. Poston explained that the qualifications considered on a 3-year rolling average and that SMU needs to keep their research

expenditures high. She added that SMU is succeeding in conferring doctoral students, but that this number cannot drop. Dr. Kamata asked that the list of eligible research expenditures be provided and Dr. Itkin agreed to retrieve the list from Dr. Nair's office by the council's January meeting. Dr. Mata added that it would be helpful to make this list accessible to faculty. Dr. Lovatt asked how these changes will affect funding for students. Dr. Poston assured the council that Moody's three-year funding commitment will remain intact. Dr. Poston explained that funding postdocs adds to research expenditures and that the council needs to discuss how Ph.D. students in the humanities and social sciences add to research expenditures.

- **Graduate Council Meeting Attendance:** Dr. Itkin asked to postpone this item until January's meeting, as Dr. McDonald would like to discuss this topic and she is not present. The council agreed.
- **Annual Progress Reports:** There was not adequate time to discuss this agenda item.

Meeting adjourned.



# Moody School of Graduate and Advanced Studies

**Graduate Council Meeting**

*December 13, 12:00-1:30pm, Ford Hall Viz Lab*

**SMU**<sup>®</sup>

# Meeting Agenda

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1. Minutes of the November 8 Meeting
2. Aga Khan University Programs (visit from Fareena Feroze and colleagues)
3. Graduate Student Experience Survey (visit from Dayna Oscherwitz)
4. Parental Leave Policy
5. Provost Faculty Fellow Assistantship Project Updates
6. Federal Work Study and Graduate Assistantships
7. Annual Progress Reports
8. Graduate Student Success Day
9. Changing R1 Criteria
10. Graduate Council Meeting Attendance
11. Research and Innovation Week 2024
12. Other Items

# Minutes of the November 8 Meeting



<https://smu.box.com/s/fu5trvby7lydxdk5bvsrda7hjzlxm32>

# Aga Khan University Programs



# Graduate Student Experience Suvey





# Parental Leave Policy



# Parental Leave Policy

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- » A working group developed a draft policy (thank you Anna, Dinesh, Kate, and Alexandra)
- » The Academic Affairs Forum (AAF) reviewed the current policy and had some input
- » The working group will revisit this and integrate AAF
- » The current policy and other documents are available here:  
<https://smu.box.com/s/al7aazpe6m5ggbc44smfpbjtpmo46aem>

# Provost's Faculty Fellow Assistantship Project



# Provost's Faculty Fellow Assistantship Report

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## » Two Surveys:

- » Survey of PhD students on their assistantships

- » Survey of DGSs/Department Chairs for PhD and MFA programs

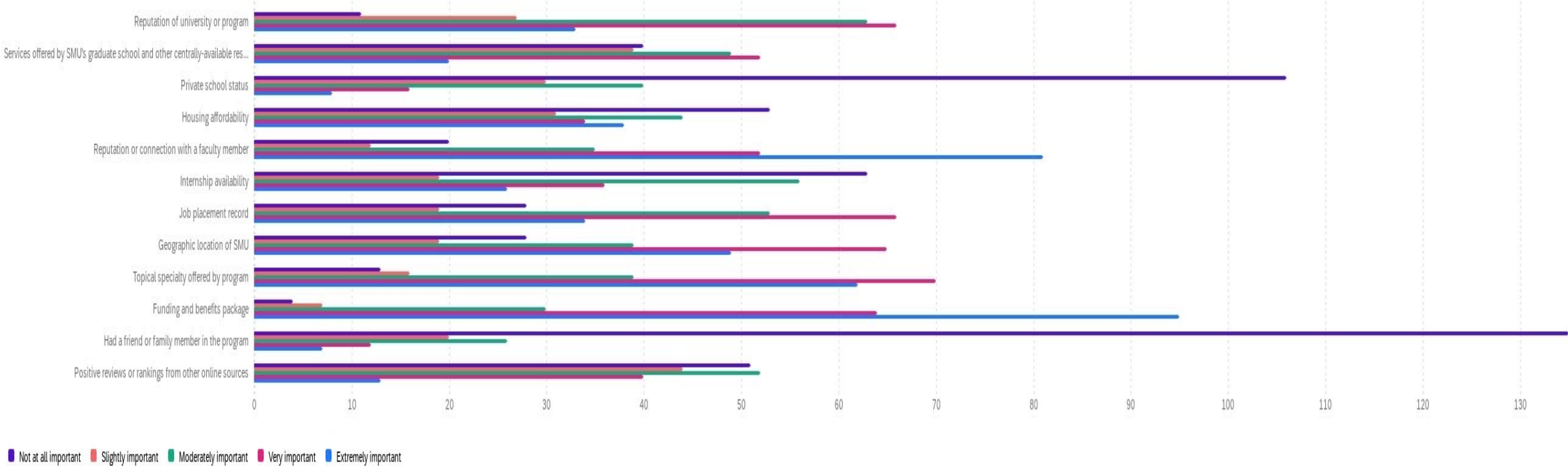
- » The survey of PhD students had 219 responses– about a 40% response rate, with good representation across schools, year in program, living situation, international vs. domestic, etc.

- » The survey of DGSs/Department Chairs had 27 responses

# Provost's Faculty Fellow Assistantship Report

From the student survey:

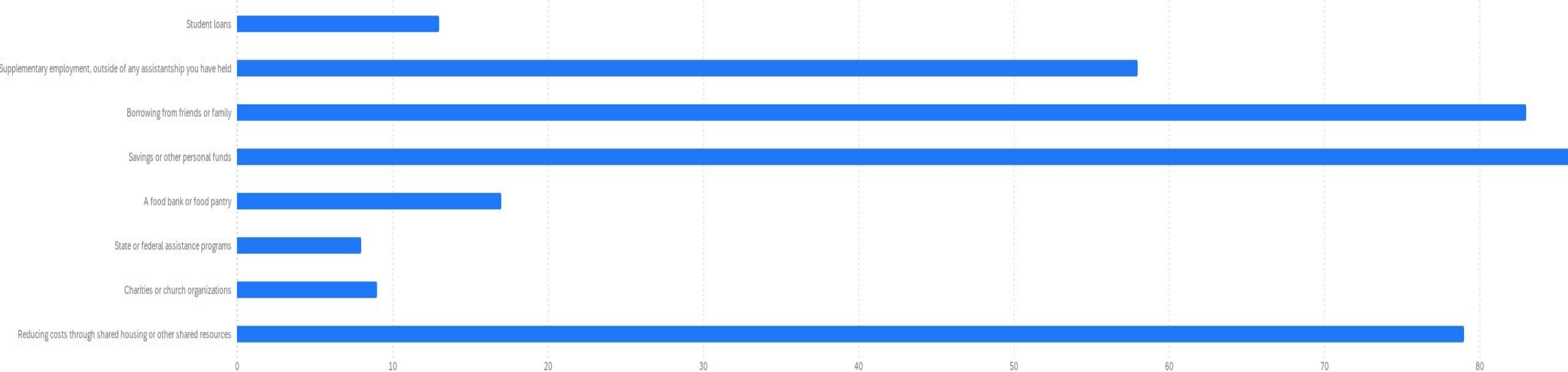
How important were each of the following factors in influencing your decision to select SMU for your graduate studies: 200 (i)



# Provost's Faculty Fellow Assistantship Report

From the student survey:

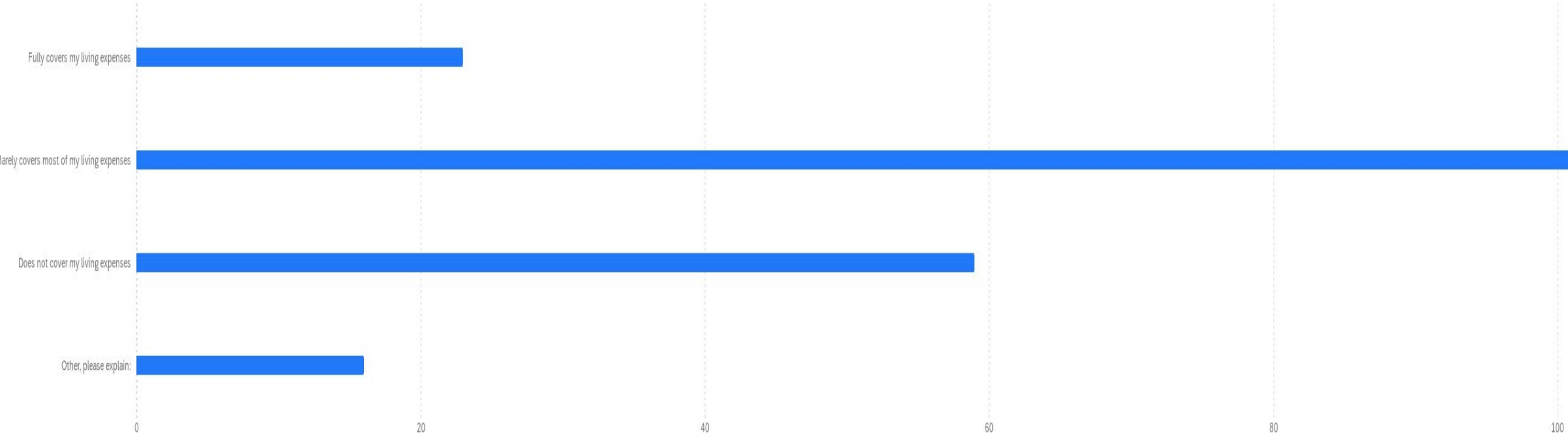
Have you supplemented your income as a PhD student through any of the following means? Please select all that apply: 184



# Provost's Faculty Fellow Assistantship Report

From the student survey:

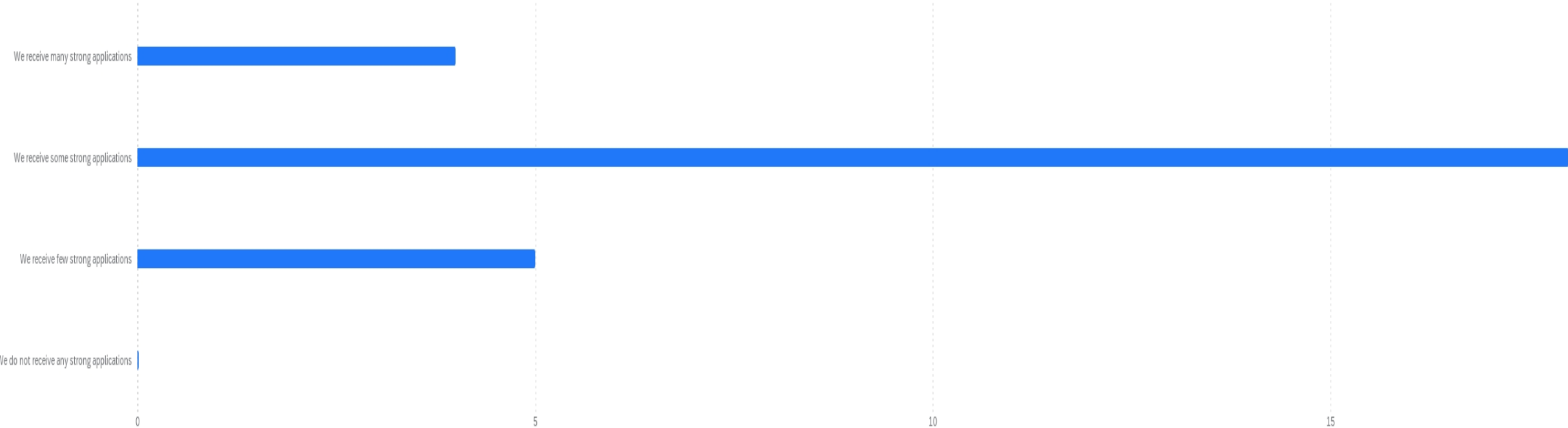
How well does your assistantship/stipend/fellowship cover your living expenses (i.e. housing, food, transportation)? 200 ⓘ



# Provost's Faculty Fellow Assistantship Report

From the program director/department chair survey:

In thinking about your graduate applications over the past few years, which of the following best describes your experience: 27 (1)



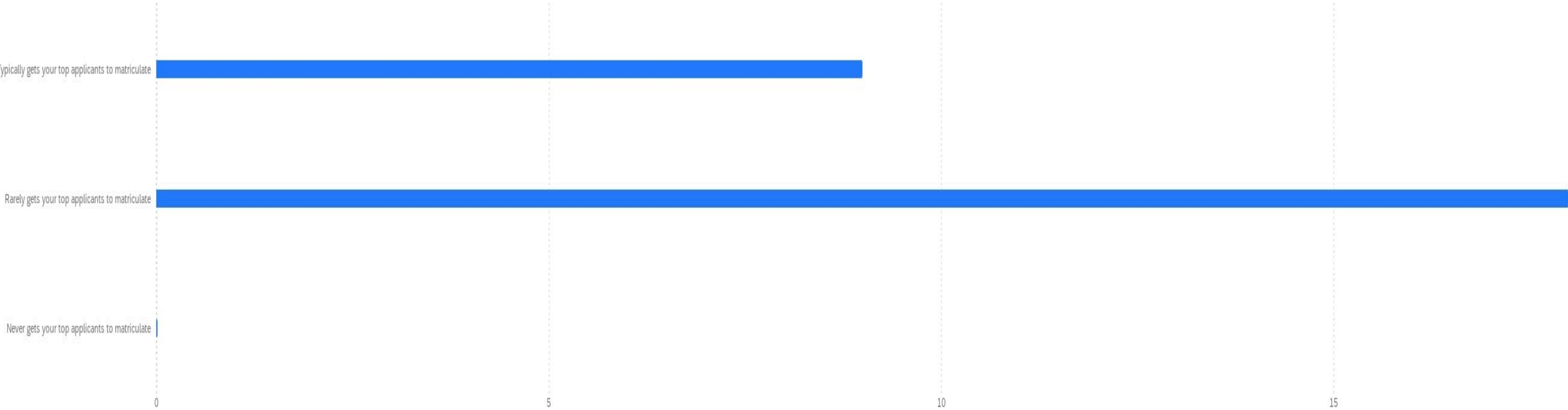


# Provost's Faculty Fellow Assistantship Report

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From the program director/department chair survey:

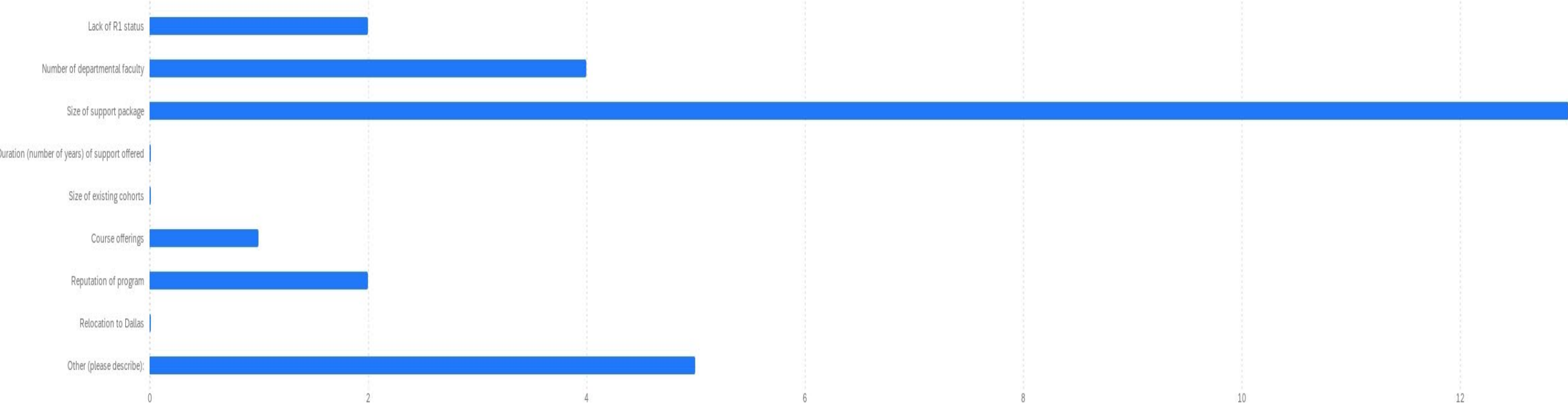
In thinking about your graduate admissions yield over the past few years, would you say that your program: 27 ⓘ



# Provost's Faculty Fellow Assistantship Report

From the program director/department chair survey:

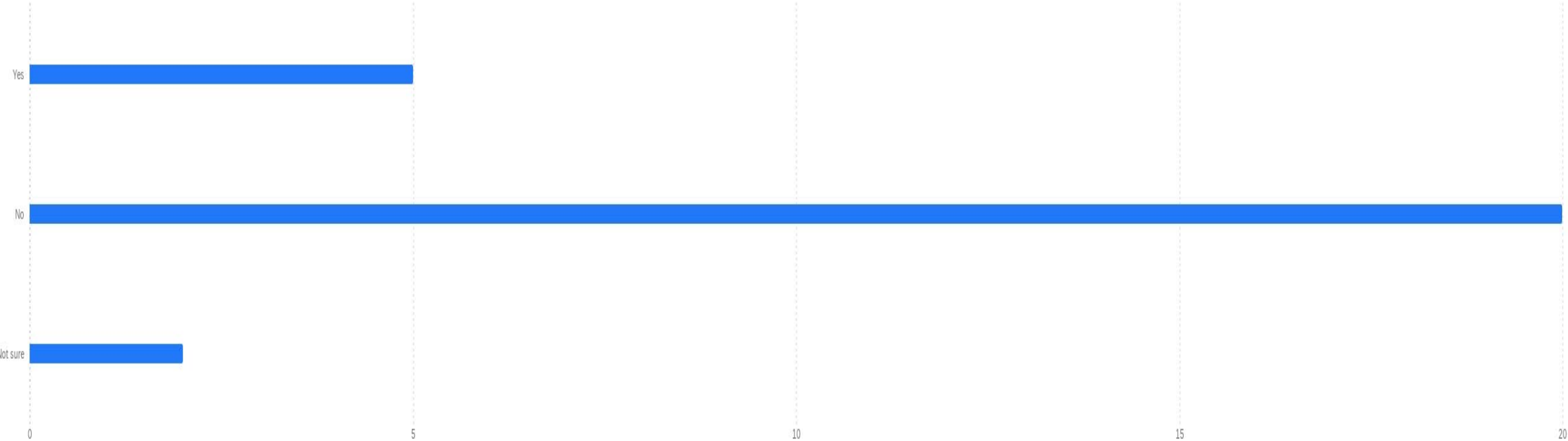
In your experience, what is the most significant impediment to recruiting your top applicants each year? 27 ①



# Provost's Faculty Fellow Assistantship Report

From the program director/department chair survey:

Does your department currently have enough graduate students who are eligible for TA or instructor assignments to cover undergraduate teaching needs? 27 ⓘ



# Federal Work Study and Graduate Assistantships



# Federal Work Study and Graduate Assistantships

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- » We are working with Financial Aid, Payroll, and other offices to explore this possibility
- » Federal work study would provide  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a student's stipend, up to \$6,000 in total (so the federal work study contribution would be \$4,500)
- » This could be done for domestic students who demonstrate need by completing the FAFSA
- » Using these federal work study funds as part of the support for eligible students would free up funds that could be used to increase support for all graduate students in the school/program
- » The Office of Financial Aid would prefer to pilot this with students in a few programs starting Fall 2024
- » There are still some issues to be worked out, but this is done at other universities, like U Memphis

# Annual Progress Reports for PhD Students



# Annual Progress Reports for Moody School Students

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- The question has come up, “what are SMU’s requirements with regards to annual review of PhD students?”
- A few cases have come up where it would have been helpful to have annual progress report documentation in the Moody School
- MFA students are also assessed annually. Should a policy apply to them as well?
- Current graduate catalog policy:

## **Assessment of Ph.D. Students**

Ph.D. students are evaluated regularly—at least once every academic year—to ensure that they are receiving the appropriate mentorship necessary for success in their program. Evaluations also determine whether students are meeting degree requirements, adhering to appropriate standards for conduct, and fulfilling the responsibilities of their assistantships. Students may be placed on probation, suspended, or dismissed if they are failing to meet standards in any of these areas. In the case of probation or suspension, clear conditions as well as a timeline for clearance of the probation or reinstatement in the program will be established and communicated to the student by their program. In all cases, Ph.D. students must maintain a 3.0 cumulative GPA, and are placed on probation for one regular term if they fall below this level. If, at the end of that term, their cumulative GPA is not up to 3.0, they may be removed from their program at the discretion of their school’s dean’s office.

# Graduate Student Success Day





# Graduate Student Success Day

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## DRAFT Agenda

### Moody Hall Auditorium and Atrium

January 29, 2024

9:00	<i>Light Breakfast</i>	
9:10	Dr. Robin Poston	Welcome Message
9:15	Dr. Maria Dixon-Hall	Best Practices in Working with Graduate Students
10:15	SMU Faculty Panel	Helping Graduate Students Graduate
	Chaired by Dr. Paige Ware	
11:00	Dr. Lillian Eby	Best Practices in Mentoring Graduate Students
12:15	<i>Break and Lunch</i>	Box Lunches to take to Break Out Tables
12:30	Multiple Facilitators	Breakout sessions on graduate student success
		Group by Topic:
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Science of Mentoring (Dr. Eby)</li><li>• Fellowship and Career Support (Ball-Phillips, Pearson)</li><li>• Recruit Highest Quality Students (Hoselton, Otto)</li><li>• Resources for Graduate Students (Bennett, Itkin)</li></ul>

# Changing R1 Criteria



<https://www.chronicle.com/article/carnegie-is-changing-how-it-classifies-r1-institutions-will-your-university-make-the-cut>

# Changing R1 Criteria

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» ACE Carnegie R1 criteria starting 2025:

- » \$50 million in research expenditures in a year, AND
- » 70 doctorates, in any research field, conferred in a year

» SMU FY23 numbers:

- » \$58 million in research expenditures
- » 139 doctorates (90 PhDs)

# Graduate Council Meeting Attendance



# Research and Innovation Week 2024



# Research and Innovation Week 2024

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- » April 1-5, Frances Anne Moody Hall
- » April 2: Undergraduate Poster Session (organized by Office of Engaged Learning)
- » April 3: Graduate Poster Session (organized by the Moody School)
- » April 4: [Keynote Talk](#), Keivan Stassun, Vanderbilt University, “The (Neuro-)Diversity Revolution: Tapping the Human Diversity of Mind to Accelerate Scientific Discovery” (organized by the Moody School, co-sponsored by DCII, Simmons School)
- » April 4: Other events organized by the Office of Research & Innovation
- » Other events that should be advertised as R&I Week events? MFA project exhibitions?

# Other Items



**Thank you!**

